

garnered Illinois State Player of the Year honors and led his team to a State championship in 2001. He then went on to Pepperdine University, where he became one of their top players and helped lead them to a national championship in 2005. After graduating in 2005, Sean continued to pursue his love of the sport, playing professionally for 2 years.

Then, Sean was selected to represent his country on the international stage as a member of the United States' Men's Indoor Volleyball Team in the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing, China. As the competition was beginning, though, the team faced a tragic setback when Todd Bachman, the father-in-law of the team's coach, Hugh McCutcheon, was fatally stabbed and his wife was seriously injured following an act of random, senseless violence.

In the face of this adversity, the team rallied behind their coach and his family to win three games. When their coach returned for the remainder of the tournament, the team won five more games, including an incredible upset victory over the top-ranked team from Brazil to win the Gold Medal.

The Olympic Games are a time for countries to come together in the spirit of competition and sportsmanship. They are a time to showcase the best our country has to offer. Sean Rooney and the Men's Volleyball Team showed outstanding courage, commitment and athleticism at the Beijing Olympics and our country couldn't be more proud.

Madam Speaker and distinguished colleagues, please join me in recognizing Sean Rooney and the entire Men's Indoor Volleyball Team for their remarkable performance in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

HONORING THE DEDICATION OF
RUDDER HIGH SCHOOL IN
BRYAN, TEXAS

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2008

Mr. EDWARDS of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor James Earl Rudder High School in the community of Bryan-College Station, Texas.

It was a privilege to take part in the dedication ceremony because the Rudder family has had a very personal impact on my life. Mrs. Earl Rudder was like a second mother to me, although in fairness, I should point out that she effectively adopted thousands of Aggies over several generations. That did not make her any less special to me, and I want to thank the Rudder children—Ann, Linda, Bud and Bob—for sharing for so many years your mother and father with all of us in your extended Aggie family.

I never met General Rudder, because he died just months before I enrolled at A&M in 1970, but like every American and every citizen of the world who benefited from the defeat of Nazi forces in World War II, I am the beneficiary of his indomitable courage on D-day, which marked the beginning of the end for Hitler's plan of world domination.

In a more personal way, I paid for my graduate school education with the scholarship I received when I was awarded the Earl Rudder Award upon my graduation from A&M in 1974.

Nevertheless, receiving that award has always been a source of deep humility to me, because I know that I could not even walk in the shadows of this great American's shoes.

I want to salute the school board members, Superintendent Cargill, Principal Piatt, and all who made this new school possible. James Earl Rudder High School is far more than brick, glass, and mortar, because a school represents the very best of our values as a community. This school represents the commitment of one generation to the next. It represents this community's willingness to tax itself to ensure that its children have a fair chance to reach their highest God-given potential.

It is in our schools and houses of worship that we witness our best sense of community, a sense that we truly are our brothers' keepers. It is in our schools that we Americans strive to provide for equality of opportunity for all. Ours is an imperfect, never ending journey, but in that march toward equality for all, we show our greatness and goodness as a nation.

Thomas Jefferson was the 33-year-old author of our Declaration of Independence. He was our third and one of our greatest Presidents. Yet, before he died, he made it clear that he wanted it etched on his gravestone that he was the founder of a university. In his wisdom, Thomas Jefferson understood the importance of education to our democracy.

Two centuries later, I believe that each of you who played a role in founding James Earl Rudder High School shares the right to be proud of your accomplishment. It is my hope that the life and values of Earl Rudder will be an inspiration to every student here from this day forward. We should never forget the story of Earl Rudder, because his is the story of the American spirit. It is a story from which we can all learn.

Born in the small town of Eden, Texas, Earl Rudder did not inherit material wealth, but his family, faith and education helped mold a true leader. Like so many Americans, he dedicated his life to helping others, to serving his country.

After graduating from Texas A&M in 1932, Earl Rudder was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve. He then chose the noble profession of teaching—first as a coach and teacher at Brady High School and later at Tarleton State College. In 1941, his country called him to duty, and did he ever answer that call. Rising through the ranks because of his integrity, courage and leadership skills, he was chosen to lead the 2nd Ranger Battalion by one of the most respected generals to ever serve in the U.S. Army, GEN Omar Bradley.

His D-day mission was to lead the best of the best up the 100-foot cliffs of Pointe du Hoc to disarm massive German guns that could have killed thousands of American G.I.s and put the Allied invasion of France at risk.

General Bradley said this about the responsibility given then LTC Earl Rudder: "No soldier in my command has ever been wished a more difficult task than that which befell the thirty-four-year-old Commander of this Provisional Ranger Force."

Two hundred and twenty-five Rangers began their mission on that perilous day when literally the fate of the world was in their hands. Only 99 survived, but because of the heroism of Earl Rudder and Rudder's Rangers

that day, our world survived the tyranny of Adolf Hitler. Lieutenant Colonel Rudder, this great Aggie and American, didn't stop there. He went on to lead a unit in the Battle of the Bulge and became one of the most decorated veterans of World War II.

Having every right to say his public service was completed at the end of World War II, Earl Rudder did what so many of America's veterans have done throughout our history. He spent the rest of his life in service to others and to the country he loved. He moved back to Brady, Texas, and became its mayor. He was elected Land Commissioner of Texas, a position he used to clean up abuses in veterans' land programs.

When he became the president of Texas A&M University, his beloved alma mater, Earl Rudder told his close classmate of '32 and my mentor, Congressman Olin E. Teague, that he had to make a decision that in some ways brought more heat on him than German guns at Pointe du Hoc. He decided to allow women into A&M and to make the Corps of Cadets voluntary for A&M students.

Some Aggies didn't talk to President Rudder ever again. But, just as he did on D-day, Earl Rudder showed the courage of his conviction. Just as D-day literally helped save the world as we know it, President Rudder's decision in the 1960s saved the future of Texas A&M. It was, perhaps, the most important decision ever made by any president of Texas A&M, and I am not sure if any other person but Earl Rudder could have made it. In 1967, President Lyndon Johnson presented Earl Rudder with the Distinguished Service Medal, our Nation's highest civilian award.

Love of faith, family, and country; courage under fire; integrity; and lifelong service to others—these were the values of Earl Rudder. They are the quintessential American values that have made ours the greatest Nation in the world.

My hope is that the story and values of Earl Rudder will inspire the lives of everyone who walks through these doors for generations to come. If so, then ours will be a better community and a better country, and we will have truly honored the service of this American hero.

May God bless James Earl Rudder High School and all who will serve there.

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET HOELZER

HON. ROBERT E. (BUD) CRAMER, JR.

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 8, 2008

Mr. CRAMER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding individual from my district, Ms. Margaret Hoelzer.

Ms. Hoelzer, an accomplished swimmer, recently competed in the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing where she earned a Silver Medal in the women's 200m backstroke and a Bronze Medal in the women's 100m backstroke. In addition, she and her teammates were awarded a Silver Medal in the women's 4x100m medley relay. A two-time Olympian, Ms. Hoelzer also competed in the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens, where she placed fifth in the 200m backstroke.

While her Olympic successes are certainly impressive, Ms. Hoelzer's swimming career includes numerous other medals and honors,